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Palestinian ambassador briefs Arab envoys about latest situation

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Further coop to enhance Pak-China ties

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Fakhar stars as Pak keep semi-final hopes alive

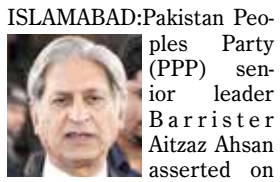
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Nawaz's return a 'deal'

ADIL SHAHEEN



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan asserted on Tuesday that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif had returned to the country under a "deal". Speaking to media in Lahore, Ahsan averred: "Those who are doing a deal can take no time to withdraw it." He was of the view that the lawyers' elections should be held on the fixed dates. Sindh former minister Saeed Ghani said on Sunday that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will emerge as the largest party in Karachi. Speaking to media in Karachi, Ghani stated, "The PPP candidates will achieve success in both the Central and Korangi districts." PPP senior leader Saeed Ghani on Sunday asserted that the political landscape was favouring Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif. Expressing his thoughts in Karachi, Ghani said: "The PML-N had believed in empowering the nation to choose its own leaders. But country, the perception is making rounds that the situation is being made favourable for Nawaz Sharif, particularly." He cautioned against any situation that heavily favoured one individual, deeming it unsuitable.

Sarwar Khan joins IPP

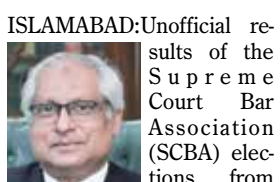
DNA



LAHORE: Another top leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) parts with the party as former federal minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan has decided to join Iste-hkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP). Khan met IPP leaders including Jahangir Tareen and Aleem Khan, and announced that he would formally join the party in Taxila in a few days. Earlier on Tuesday, former PTI MPA Chaudhary Sajid Mehmood announced quitting the party while condemning the May 9 incidents. "I condemn the anti-establishment statements of the PTI chairman and those responsible for the May 9 incidents should be punished at all costs," he said. He apologised to the party workers and announced parting ways with the former ruling party.

Adv. Shahzad wins SCBA elections

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Unofficial results of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) elections from the provincial capital show that Shahzad Shaukat appeared as the new president of the bar. Shahzad Shaukat, representing the Independent Group, secured a victory over Mian Abdul Qudus in Lahore from the Professional Group in the annual Supreme Court Bar elections. Shahzad Shaukat's win is being celebrated by senior lawyers. They are also raising slogans for Ahsan Bhoon and Azam Nazir Tarar.

Top leadership huddle PML-N calls for early elections

Ahsan Iqbal briefs media after party meeting; says party wants to see Nawaz as the next prime minister of Pakistan

ABBAS HASHMI / DNA

LAHORE: The PML-N has demanded immediate elections in the country. PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal expressed these while talking to media after a party meeting chaired by Nawaz Sharif in Lahore. "The party has invited applications from November onward from the candidates for contesting national and provincial assemblies elections and would hold a special general council at the Sharif Medical city on Nov 4 to express solidarity with the Palestinian people," said Iqbal. Briefing the media, the PML-N leader urged the courts to quash all the 'fake' cases against Nawaz Sharif and the elections should be held during the last week of January 2024. He, without naming PTI chief, said the PML-N people were locked up in fake cases and now the PTI chairman should also be locked up in order to punish him for telling a lie. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif is set to kick off his party's election campaign on November 10, as the general elections draw closer. Nawaz - who left for London in November 2019 for medical treatment following the Lahore High Court's approval - returned to Pakistan on October 21 after a four-year self-imposed exile in a grand welcome organised by the party at Lahore's Minar-e-Pakistan.

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ECP reserves verdict against caretaker ministers

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has reserved its verdict after listening to arguments on the petition against the political affiliation of caretaker federal ministers, following a hearing on Tuesday. A 5-member bench headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja conducted the hearing. The Chief Election Commissioner inquired about the government's representation in the case. In response, the Additional Attorney General stated that he was representing the federal government. Appearing before the Election Commission, petitioner Syed Azizuddin Kakakhel pointed out that Fawad Hasan Fawad and Ahad Cheema held significant positions in the previous government, with Ahad Cheema being appointed as a Special Assistant on political considerations.

Continued on Page 06

Human tragedy deepens Over 500 casualties in Jabalia massacre

Israeli aircraft also attacked in the Al-Shati refugee camp in western Gaza City

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: Israeli warplanes bombed the densely-populated Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza Strip on Tuesday killing more than 100 civilians and wounding 400 in a preliminary estimate. Dozens remain under the rubble of the destroyed buildings, medical sources said. The health ministry spokesman said that the casualties in the Jabalia massacre might exceed those murdered in the shelling of the Ma'madani Hospital. Local sources said that the warplanes fired 20 missiles and huge American-made bombs on a residential block that contains 20 houses, destroying them completely over the heads of their occupants. Iyad al-Buzom, the interior ministry spokesman, said that the Israeli warplanes dropped at least six bombs on

Continued on Page 06

Israel used white phosphorous: Amnesty

WEB DESK

LONDON: The Israeli army fired artillery shells containing white phosphorous, an incendiary weapon, in military operations along Lebanon's southern border between 10 and 16 October 2023, Amnesty International said today. One attack on the town of Dhayra on 16 October must be investigated as a war crime because it was an indiscriminate attack that injured at least nine civilians and damaged

Continued on Page 06

Ambassador Rabei briefs Arab envoys about the latest Palestine situation

Heads of Arab diplomatic missions in Islamabad pay a solidarity visit to the Embassy of the State of Palestine

DNA



ISLAMABAD: From left to right first row: envoys of Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Bahrain, Libya, Kuwait, Qatar, Yemen, (Standing), Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, posing for a picture during their visit to the Palestine embassy. - DNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ambassadors of the Arab countries accredited in Islamabad made a solidarity visit to the Embassy of the State of Palestine, in light of the dangerous developments and dangerous humanitarian condi-

tions experienced in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially the brutal aggression against the Gaza Strip. During his welcoming speech, the Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Ahmed Rabei, touched on the seriousness and horror of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip due to the Israeli occupation forces continuing to commit war crimes and genocide against Palestinian civilians and their destruction of necessary civilian facilities, especially hospitals. He provided an explanation of what is happening in the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem.

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Blome meets Jilani

Both sides mull ways to boost ties

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome met today with Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani to discuss a broad range of critical bilateral issues, including the safe and efficient processing of Afghan citizens eligible for relocation or resettlement in the United States. The Ambassador highlighted the two countries' mutual interest in ensuring the safety and security of refugees and asylum seekers, and the importance of putting in place appropriate screening mechanisms so that individuals with legitimate claims of credible fear are not placed in harm's way.

Faizabad sit-in Absar accuses Gen Faiz of 'controlling channels'
Pemra officials were under pressure from 'serving officers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: In his affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court in connection with the infamous Faizabad sit-in review case on Monday, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) former chairman Absar Alam Haider accused then-Director General of Counter Intelligence (DG-C) at the Inter-Services Intelligence Major General Faiz Hamid and his subordinates of controlling the "TV Channel policy" through "unlawful means". Multiple pleas were filed challenging the verdict on the Faizabad protest staged by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) in 2017 against the then-Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government. Last month, the apex court - in response to a series of review petitions submitted against its previous ruling - had said that it would revisit the Faizabad sit-in case.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France, Nicolas Galey, called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, & Economic Affairs Dr. Shamsah Akhtar. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss economic relations between Pakistan and France and collaborative efforts in various sectors. - DNA

Equal rights for every party No ban on PTI, says PM Kakar

The prime minister assured that the interim set up was ready to assist ECP in election process

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar on Tuesday said neither the ECP had placed any restrictions on the PTI nor there was any move to dismantle it as a political party. Interacting with media during his visit to Mayo Hospital, the prime minister said it was also the domain of the ECP to allocate election symbols to the political parties. He further clarified that the caretaker set up would not commit any illegal and unconstitutional acts.

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

The caretaker prime minister further elaborated that it was the government's policy that all the big and small registered political parties had the equal rights and opportunities to contest the upcoming polls. "Those who were raising apprehensions over provision of level playing field also have the freedom to make such claims," he added. To a question, he reiterated that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was a constitutional

Continued on Page 06

Be respectful with immigrants

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday directed officials and agencies to be respectful with undocumented immigrants while detaining them in holding centers after the deadline. Talking to media persons here, he said strict action would be taken against officials found involved in manhandling of the immigrants and including Afghans while transporting them to the holding centers. He said, the ministry had established a complaint cell with hotline number to immediately address the complaints of mistreatment or manhandling with any illegal immigrant. "We have given clear instructions to all agencies and officials to treat women,

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President promotes main streaming visually impaired through skills

President Alvi also emphasized improving the accessibility of visually impaired persons through assistive technological gadgets

DNA

ISLAMABAD : President Dr Arif Alvi said it was the collective responsibility of the society to mainstream the visually impaired persons by providing them with vocational skill sets and specialized jobs. Addressing an event held in connection with the White Cane Safety Day, the president stressed sensitizing the society towards blind and the visually impaired by identifying their special needs and accommodating them. Begum Samina Alvi, members of the diplomatic community, and visually impaired children attended the event meant to raise awareness about the ways to address the challenges faced by persons with such disabilities, here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The president said career education and vocational skills for visually impaired students should be started

as early as possible in the mainstream school system.

This will provide fellow students an opportunity to deal first-hand with persons with disabilities and learn to accommodate them in society, he said.

President Alvi also emphasized improving the accessibility of visually impaired persons through assistive technological gadgets including the personal digital assistants that guide them as the sensory camera sees objects and describes them aloud. He said the white cane was the tool for the visually impaired person to be identified in public, thus easing their mobility outdoors. He said ending discrimination and helping such people to become self-reliant and useful members of society needed to be the goal of the State. Dr Alvi said the country's first visually impaired diplomat Saima Saleem made history by making a speech at the

platform of the United Nations. He also mentioned Yousef Saleem who became the country's first visually impaired judge and set a courageous example for other people with such disabilities. He lauded the efforts of the Ministry of Human Rights for providing educational opportunities to children with disabilities and addressing their specific needs.

Interim Minister for Human Rights Khalil George said the ministry was raising awareness about physically challenged persons through various activities and advocacy programmes. He said the special needs school under the ministry was providing education through Braille and other modern assistive gadgets. The visually impaired children presented a tableau on the national song 'Dil Dil Pakistan'. The president distributed white canes among the visually impaired children and later al



ISLAMABAD : British High Commissioner Jane Marriott meeting with Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Bugti. DNA

Gunmen kill policeman, 4 labourers in alochistan

QUETTA ; Police in Balochistan say four labourers and a Police Constable were martyred by unknown gunmen in Turbat on Tuesday. A police official said that the labourers had taken shelter in a police station due to security threats. The slain labourers belonged to Punjab and had gone to Balochistan for work. Police suspect involvement of Baloch separatists behind the incident. In a statement, Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on labourers and a police constable. He said elements involved in the incident would be dealt with iron hands. He said sacrifices rendered by Security Forces will not go in vain.—APP

CTD claims arrest of target killer

KARACHI: The Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Tuesday arrested an alleged target killer affiliated with MQM-London from Civil Lines Area and recovered an illegal pistol from his possession. The arrested was identified as Rehman Qureshi alias Bablu, according to spokesman for CTD Sindh. During initial interrogation, the arrested revealed that he was a member of North Karachi target killing team and had been involved in targeted killings of number of opponent political activists. The recovered pistol was sent to forensics division. Further investigations were underway.—APP

Interior minister warns those who will shelter Afghans

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday directed officials and agencies to be respectful with undocumented immigrants while detaining them in holding centers after the deadline. Talking to media persons here, he said strict action would be taken against officials found involved in manhandling of the immigrants and including Afghans while transporting them to the holding centers. He said the ministry had established a complaint cell with hotline number to immediately address the complaints of mistreatment or manhandling with any illegal immigrant. "We have given clear instructions to all agencies and officials to treat women, children and elders with special care and respect"

the minister said, adding that the arrangements for food and medical facilities were made in the holding centers. The deadline for undocumented immigrants including Afghan refugees for voluntary return ended on October 31 after which the government's crackdown against them had started in full swing, he added. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has collected entire data of undocumented immigrants in the country through geo-fencing, the minister said, adding that those who still tried to escape government's amnesty would be caught from their hideouts. Bugti also warned of strict action against locals helping the immigrants and providing them shelter. "Any Pakistani who will rent his house to illegal immigrant will be considered

as partner in crime and treated equally according to the law," he added. The minister said that it was a national duty of Pakistani citizens to inform the government about illegal immigrants and their residences. "Now there are few hours remaining, whoever does not leave Pakistan by the specified time and does not have a valid visa and passport, he will be deported," he said.

He said that respect for women and elders was being considered during the evacuation, adding children were being treated with compassion, around two lakh illegal people had gone back during last two months. The minister said that illegal residents could go back to their countries to get legal documents and come back here to do business and meetings with friends.

Gov't defends hike in gas prices

DNA

LAHORE : Caretaker Minister for Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali says decision to increase gas tariff was taken in the greater national interest. Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi in Islamabad on Tuesday, he said the decision will not affect 57 percent of the gas consumers. He said 36 percent middle class consumers will pay the prices according to their gas consumption,

while only 7 percent rich class will be charged with high prices. The Minister said the government is also giving 139 billion rupees subsidy to the domestic gas sector, while 45 billion rupees subsidy is being given to Urea and fertilizer sector. He categorically stated that no increase in gas tariff has been made for Tandoors. Muhammad Ali said there are several factors which compelled the government to increase in the gas prices. He said the gas reserves are declining for the past ten years and resultantly government imports LNG on cheap

prices to meet requirements. Sharing statistics about gas needs in the country, he said total gas requirement by OGRA in the country is of 916 billion rupees while it costs 513 billion rupee with a deficit of 403 billion rupees. He said had the gas prices not surged, the government would have to bear loss of over 400 billion rupee, which would have direct impact on our circular debt. Minister said the decision would also stop increase in the circular debt of gas sector, besides it will check sky rocketing price hike of commodities and foreign reserves position.

IG PUNJAB held an open court

DNA

LAHORE: According to the sources of Daily Notable, Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar held an open court at the Central Police Office in which IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar issued relief orders after listening to the problems of citizens and police officials. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar sought reports from the concerned supervisory officers on the citizens' requests and ordered the DPOs to conduct an inquiry under their supervision and provide relief to the citizens. IG Punjab while instructing the officers said that solving the problems of the citizens is among the top priorities so all the supervisory officers should speed up the priority actions on the requests of the citizens. IG Punjab further said that officers and personnel found guilty of violating SOPs during duty will not get any concessions. IG Punjab also heard the applications presented by the police personnel and their families in the open court. Dr. Usman Anwar ordered immediate relief according to merit to the Admin, Discipline and Welfare Branches on the requests of police employees. IGP said that all requests including pension, discipline measures and leaves should be resolved on merit as soon as possible.

KP sets up holding camps for Afghans

DNA

PESHAWAR : Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has established three transit camps for temporary stay of illegal foreign nationals before their repatriation to their homeland. The camps have been established in Peshawar, Khyber and Haripur districts. Separate desks have also been established for male, female and special persons. All basic facilities including health and other related facilities will be provided at the camps. Meanwhile, NADRA mobile vans have been deputed for registration of illegal Afghan citizens.

Zainab Nawaz earns "Silver Award"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Displaying a profound scholarly aptitude and latent creative writing prowess, Zainab Nawaz, a ninth-grade student, has earned a Silver Award in the Junior writing category of the international essay writing competition "The Queen's International Commonwealth Essay Writing Competition 2023". This year, The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, the world's oldest international writing competition, received 34924 entries from 56 Commonwealth countries. Zainab Nawaz, an avid reader and writer, competed against thou-



sands of entries and earned a Silver Award for showing her creative brilliance representing Pakistan in this prestigious international competition.

New migraine medications effective but costly

KARACHI : Cost of drugs and procedures to treat neurological disorders is very high and is constantly rising, not just in Pakistan but globally. The healthcare policymakers seem least concerned about this grave issue, President Epilepsy Foundation Pakistan and noted neurophysician of the country Dr Fowzia Siddiqui, at a South Asian Migraine Management Advisory Board meeting in Hong Kong, where she represented Pakistan. The advisory board meeting discussed about a new group of medications to reduce and treat migraine attacks.

They said that migraine is not just a headache, but a debilitating condition associated with high global disease burden. In a survey in 2019 it was shown that 1.1 billion people suffer from migraine and 42.1 million years were lived with disability globally. This makes it the 2nd largest cause of disability especially in women of 15-49 years worldwide. They said new treatments which are novel in action and modulate the genetic receptors that are activated during migraine known as CGRP antagonist monoclonal antibodies. CGRPs are tiny molecules that are found to be secreted in migraine attacks. Most of these antibodies are given in injection form and are very expensive. For example eptinezumab is in IV form given every three months to prevent migraine attacks from happening.—APP



Islamabad : H.E. Ambassador Danila Ganich visited ISSI and had meeting with DG Amb Sohail Mahmood and CSP team members. Chairman BoG Amb Khalid Mahmood also joined. Exchange of views covered Pakistan-Russia relations and regional, global developments.—DNA

UN urged for lasting solutions in Palestine, Kashmir

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sajrani Tuesday called on the United Nations (UN) to take concrete steps for the lasting solution of Palestine and Kashmir issues as it was impossible to establish peace in the world without solving the two problems. During a meeting with a parliamentary delegation, led by President of the Rwandan Senate Dr Kalinda Francois Xavier, he said, "No human being in the world can remain silent on the atrocities and human rights violations that are happening in Palestine. The Senate chairman emphasized the universal nature of the issue. "The cruelty and brutality going on in Palestine is not related to any religion; it is cruelty to humanity," he said, according to a

News release issued by the Senate Secretariat. Sadiq Sanjrani also stressed the importance of the Kashmir issue, stating, "The occupied Kashmir issue is a core issue of Pakistan," and called for its resolution in line with the UN resolutions. He advocated for the right to self-determination for Kashmiris. He urged the United Nations to adopt a common plan of action for immediate solutions to the two problems. He expressed the belief that negotiations were the solution to the problems and urged the UN to facilitate talks for resolving the issues. In a show of Pakistan's commitment to international cooperation and diplomacy, he noted, "Wherever there is a problem of humanity in the world, Pakistan definitely raises its voice." The Senate chairman advocated for peace and harmony through parliamentary diplomacy.

He stressed the importance of collective efforts in removing obstacles to development and promoting regional peace, stating, "We have to step up collective efforts to remove obstacles and promote regional peace and harmony using parliamentary diplomacy." Sadiq Sanjrani warmly welcomed the Rwandan delegation and expressed Pakistan's strong dedication to nurturing its bilateral relationship with Rwanda. "Pakistan attaches great importance to its bilateral relations with Rwanda, and we are pleased to witness the development of pleasant relations between our two countries." He announced the allocation of six scholarships for engineering and medical students from Rwanda, emphasizing the global recognition of Pakistan's education in the fields. Sadiq Sanjrani reiterated

Pakistan's commitment to strengthening relations with African countries, suggesting that trade and investment could be promoted through the exchange of delegations in the business and investment sectors. He also recognized the enduring patience and unity demonstrated by African nations in resolving their disputes. He highlighted the immense potential for cooperation in vital sectors such as agriculture, food security, and human resource development, all of which could be harnessed for mutual benefit. In the pursuit of bolstering trade and investment, the Senate chairman stressed the need for fostering closer relations between businessmen from both countries. The meeting underscored the importance of parliamentary contacts, diplomacy, and the exchange of delegations to further strengthen bilateral relations.

آئل اینڈ گیس
ریگولٹری اتھارٹی
حکومت پاکستان

**Oil & Gas
Regulatory Authority**
Government of Pakistan

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Under Regulation 3(B) of The PPRA Regulations of Consultancy Services Regulation 2010

SELECTION OF CONSULTANT FIRMS FOR UNDERTAKING STUDY ON STRATEGIC STORAGE/STOCKS

1. Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), formed under the OGRA Ordinance, 2002 regulating Oil and Gas Sector in Pakistan and dealing with licensing of Oil infrastructure/logistics vis, Refineries, Storages, Oil Pipeline, Installation oil testing facility, undertake marketing of refined oil products and the related issues. As advised by the GOP, OGRA intends to carry out a study to develop an overall framework for the development of Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) for crude oil and refined oil products, consistent with the government's energy security considerations in line with prevailing international best practices.
2. OGRA invites reputable consultant firms who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue for the services of conducting studies/research, having minimum of ten years' experience of carrying out study/research on strategic reserves requirement, specifically Crude oil and Refined Oil Products. The firm must have strong knowledge of the international practices of SPR, as well as the local factors like a country's geographical/geopolitical and economic position in addition to the technical/financial knowledge i.e. local refineries' configuration, capacities, consumption centers, lead time, mechanism for replenishing the stocks, its control, monitoring and cost of SPR etc.
3. Interested consultant(s) must provide detailed CV(s) of member(s) of core team highlighting relevant experience.
4. The applicant consultant firm and/or its personnel must not be incumbent employee of OGRA licensees in mid and downstream oil sector, or have any direct/ or indirect relation with OGRA, Petroleum Division or Ministry of Defense, in addition to not having any business, rendering it in conflict of interest with the above assignment as per section 4 of the PPRA Regulation of Consultancy Services Regulation 2010. The Applicant to provide the undertaking in the form of an affidavit to the above effect.
5. The applicant has not been declared blacklisted or debarred by any local procuring agency and/or foreign country, international organization, and/ or other foreign institutions. The Applicant to provide the undertaking in the form of an affidavit to the above effect.
6. Method of selection will be Quality and cost basis in line with section 3 (b) of the PPRA Regulations of Consultancy Services Regulation 2010. The Financial Bid should contain a lumpsum figure, inclusive of all charges. Conditional bids shall not be accepted.
7. The Technical and Financial Proposals shall be received in separate sealed envelopes within 30 calendar days i.e. till **11:00 AM on 5th December, 2023** and only Technical Proposals shall be opened in the first instance for technical evaluation on same date at **11:30 AM** in the presence of the bidders, or their authorized representatives, who may like to present bids to the **Senior Executive Director (OSC)** in OGRA office.
8. The financial proposals of the technically responsive/ or qualified applicant, under regulation 3(B) of the PPRA Regulation of Consultancy Services Regulation 2010, shall be opened in the presence of the bidders on a date and time to be communicated to them in advance. The financial bids should be valid for three months from date of opening of technical bids.
9. Each envelopes containing the proposals, shall clearly be marked separately, "**Technical Proposal**" and "**Financial Proposal**".
10. OGRA reserves the right to reject all the bids as per rule 33 of the PPRA Rules, 2004.
11. Scope of work/TORs and evaluation criteria can be obtained from the OGRA website www.ogra.org.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk.
12. In case bid opening date is falling on a holiday, the bid will be opened on next working day at same time. This advertisement is also available on OGRA and PPRA website at www.ogra.org.pk and www.ppra.org.pk.

Senior Executive Director (OSC)
Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority
Plot No 54-B, Fazl-e-Haq Road,
Blue Area, Islamabad Pakistan.
Email: asajjad@ogra.org.pk

PID (J) No. 2634/23

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
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Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
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Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pakistan Economy yielding positive results: Report

Hard-earned gains on the fiscal and external accounts have started to translate into a pick-up in economic activity," said Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue in the foreword of the monthly Economic Update and Outlook for October 2023

ISLAMABAD: The economic indicators of the first quarter of the current fiscal year (2023-24) show Pakistan's economy had set the growth momentum and was yielding positive results owing to the government's stabilization measures, the finance ministry said in its recent report released here on Tuesday. "Hard-earned gains on the fiscal and external accounts have started to translate into a pick-up in economic activity," said Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue in the foreword of the monthly Economic Update and Outlook for October 2023. She said, markets have rallied on positive economic data and signs of an emerging recovery, adding the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) has rallied 11% in October and has crossed the psychological barrier of 51,000 points, for the first time since May 2017. The international and domestic bond markets have rallied around 8% in October on expectations of ease in inflationary pressures and a positive expectation for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff review in November. The rupee (PKR) recovered 9% in October due to reforms initiated on the exchange companies and crackdown against illegal transac-

tions. The recent release of Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) data showed a positive growth of 0.5 percent during July-August FY2024 against the contraction of 1.3 percent last year. The month-on-month (MoM) and year-on-year (YoY) basis growth trajectory is encouraging, as LSM grew by 8.4% and 2.5% in August 2023, respectively. In agriculture sector, the cotton production showing a bumper increase of 126.6 percent (estimated at 11.5 million bales) for 2023-24, compared to last year. Rice production is also showing a surge of 18.0 percent compared to last year. The increase in these main crops is encouraging for the exports and overall economic outlook in FY2024. Moreover, input situation is positive as farm tractors production and sales show a steep growth of 45.0 percent (11,586) and 64.1 percent (12,090), respectively during July-September FY2024 over the same period last year. During Q1 FY2024, the strong revenue performance led to a primary surplus of Rs 417bn (0.4% of GDP) against the target of Rs 87bn under the IMF Standby agreement (SBA). FBR revenues clocked in at Rs 2,042bn compared to the target of Rs 1,978bn during Q1, with a strong 37% y/y increase in direct

taxes, while FED collection increased by 61%/y. Similarly, non-tax revenue also posted a significant increase of 100% in Q1 with higher collection on Petroleum Levy (PL) and dividends of SOEs. On the external front, FDI reached \$ 402.3 million during July-September FY2024 (\$349.8 million last year) increased by 15.0 percent on account of some Chinese investment in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) related projects. The MoM exports increased by 1.5 percent to \$ 2.5 billion in September 2023 as compared to \$ 2.4 billion in August 2023. "The rebounded economic activity in major trading partners coupled with relaxed import restrictions, is mitigating disruptions in the supply of raw materials and supporting export-oriented industries," it adds. The narrower trade balance is supporting the current account which has recorded a deficit of \$ 947 million for July-September FY2024 as against a deficit of \$ 2.3 billion last year. Workers' remittances stood at \$ 6.3 billion (\$ 7.9 billion last year) posting a decrease by 19.8 percent during the period under review. However, on MoM ba-

sis, it increased by 5.3 percent mainly on account of shrinking wedge between interbank and open market exchange rate. During July-August FY2024, the performance of the fiscal sector remained satisfactory owing to a significant rise in revenues relative to expenditures. Although higher markup payments continued to be the major source of increase in current expenditures, but growth in non-mark-up spending was restricted to 7.4 percent. The fiscal deficit stood at almost the same level of 0.8 percent of GDP as last year whereas the primary balance posted a surplus of Rs 144.8 billion against the deficit of Rs 90.2 billion during the period under review. The report says that in the coming months, it is expected that overall economic activity will remain positive throughout the outgoing fiscal year due to a rebound in domestic economic activities and improvement in inflationary pressures. Moreover, recent coordinated efforts by the government organizations to address macroeconomic imbalances, will gear towards achieving stabilization in the coming months and realizing sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the medium to long-term. The report

anticipated that inflation would be better contained compared to the elevated levels observed in the first quarter of FY2024. The projection of inflation is hovering around 27 to 29 percent for October 2023. It says, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation stood at 31.4 percent on a YoY basis in September 2023 as compared to 23.2 percent in September 2022. The major drivers include Food and non-alcoholic beverages, Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Fuel, Transport and Furnishing & household equipment maintenance. Moreover, recent administrative and regulatory action for curbing illegal activities in the FX market has narrowed down the gap between interbank and open market exchange rates and worker's remittances increased by 5.3% on MoM basis. All these components have been reflected in the current account deficit, which decreased significantly by 95.1% on MoM basis and 97.8% on YoY basis. "The government is pursuing economic revival measures to improve the near-term economic situation and taking policy, administrative, and relief interventions in order to control inflationary pressure in FY2024," it adds. —Agencies

Former AG Bokhari passes away

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Riyaz H Bokhari former Auditor General of Pakistan and former Federal Secretary passed away in Lahore on 29th of October 2023 at age 98. Mr. Riyaz Bokhari had an illustrious career as a Bureaucrat for almost four decades. Besides being the Auditor General of Pakistan he held several important positions in the Federal Government which included the portfolios of Secretary Industries, Secretary Defence Production, Chairman National Fertilizer Corporation of Pakistan, Chairman Pakistan Railways and Member Finance Railway Board. His Namaz e Janaza will be held today the 31st of October 2023 at 4 pm after Asar Prayers at T Block Mosque, Phase 2 DHA, Lahore. Qul will be held at the halls of Defence J Club, Phase 1, DHA, Lahore on 2nd of November at 4 pm with dua at 5 pm. He was the father of Professor Shahid H Bokhari, Rubina Bokhari and Sohail Bokhari. —APP

Commissioner directs to take action against burning of garbage

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Laiqat Ali Chhatta on Tuesday directed the officials of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) to continue anti-smog and anti-dengue drive during week-long cleanliness campaign. He said this while visiting various areas of the city including Union Council 17,19 and 20 to inspect the cleanliness arrangements made for the special drive. Laiqat said that the purpose of observing Cleanliness Week was to create awareness about the hygienic environment and make the city waste-free. He directed the officials to take strict action against those involved in the burning of garbage and involve the maximum number of people in the cleanliness drive so that they could support the RWMC in making Rawalpindi a clean and green city. The Commissioner interacted with the Union Council secretaries and directed to deploy more workers in each union council of the city during the cleanliness week. He urged the residents to cooperate with the RWMC staff and contact on toll-free helpline number 1139 in case of any problem. The cleanliness week started on October 30 will continue till November 6.—APP

Parliamentary delegation from Rwanda meets with Sanjrani



FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A distinguished parliamentary delegation, led by the President of the Rwandan Senate, Dr Kalinda Francois Xavier, held a meeting with Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, at Parliament House. The meeting, which took place in a spirit of friendship and cooperation, focused on a range of significant topics. The discussions at the meeting centred around various issues of mutual interest, underlining the commitment of both nations to strengthen bilateral relations and parliamentary ties. Emphasis was laid on the further expansion of bilateral trade as part of Pakistan's "Look Africa" policy, which opens

up exciting possibilities for trade and cooperation between the two nations. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani warmly welcomed the Rwandan delegation and expressed Pakistan's strong dedication to nurturing its bilateral relationship with Rwanda. He stated, "Pakistan attaches great importance to its bilateral relations with Rwanda, and we are pleased to witness the development of pleasant relations between our two countries." Chairman Senate also reiterated Pakistan's intent to establish friendly and productive relations with its African brothers, recognizing the enduring patience and unity demonstrated by African nations in resolving their disputes. Furthermore, Chairman

Senate highlighted the immense potential for cooperation in vital sectors such as agriculture, food security, and human resource development, all of which can be harnessed for mutual benefit. In the pursuit of bolstering trade and investment, Chairman Senate stressed the need for fostering closer relations between businessmen from both countries. The meeting underscored the importance of parliamentary contacts, diplomacy, and the exchange of delegations to further strengthen bilateral relations. Pakistan's commitment to Africa was also outlined, with Chairman Senate mentioning a special strategy for support and coordination with African countries. He emphasized the "Look Africa"

policy as a beacon for opening new avenues of cooperation, fostering better relations, and promoting trade cooperation. During the meeting, Sanjrani underlined that Pakistan has taken a significant step to strengthen its relations by establishing embassy in Rwanda, marking a historic milestone in the diplomatic ties between the two nations. He hoped that Rwanda will also establish its embassy in Pakistan, facilitating opportunities for businessmen, investors, and people of both countries." He emphasized the role of parliaments in regional peace and development, affirming that "Parliaments have a heavy responsibility for peace and development in the region."

Pak-Turkiye Trade in goods accord hailed

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri has also expressed his satisfaction over the fact that the Pakistan-Turkiye Trade in Goods Agreement had been signed between the two governments and now there is to benefit from this agreement. The President ICCI apprised APP here on Tuesday, that in the fiscal year 2023-24, the bilateral trade volume between the two brotherly countries has crossed \$1 billion after a long hiatus of ten long years and has climbed up to \$1.1 billion per year. Now, he expected, the bilateral trade volume would get a boost in the near future. Pakistani exporters should target value-added textiles; sports goods; surgical equipment; rice, fruits and vegetables, and construction materials. The President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), Dr. Khurram Tariq explained that a very rigorous and regular consultative process had continued in the federal ministry of commerce for a period of years, and representatives of the trade and industrial community of the country were duly consulted on Pakistan Turkey trade.. The main import items from Turkiye to Pakistan are Cotton, textile yarn, fabrics, textile machinery general industrial machinery and equipment, manufacturers of metal, chemical materials, and products The main export from Pakistan to Turkiye are Cotton fabrics, articles of apparel, clothing accessories, synthetic dyes and color lakes, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), rubber tyres The Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Turkiye is likely to be signed by the start of the coming year 2024, a senior official in the Ministry of Commerce told media here. Talking to the official informed that during the last round of negotiation, the two sides agreed on a final list of tariff lines —DNA

Over 729,000 tons of certified wheat seeds to be available

ISLAMABAD: With a keen focus on maximizing per-acre wheat crop yield this season, the government is committed to ensuring the availability of all agricultural inputs, including certified seeds, fertilizers and pesticides across the country. Approximately 729,000 metric tons of high-quality certified wheat seeds would be available to the local farming communities during the current season which comprises over 46 per cent of the total local demand, said Food Security Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Imtiaz Ali Gopang. Talking to APP on Tuesday, he informed that in addition to seeds, the government was implementing various strategies to guarantee an ample supply of essential agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers, pesticides and access to finance to achieve the fixed targets of the season.—APP

China-Pak joint research Center inaugurated

"It is also a very good opportunity for academia in Pakistan and young students to have access to modern research in the field of Earth sciences in China," added Shahid Iqbal, assistant professor, Earth Sciences Department, Quaid-i-Azam University

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A scientific and technological innovation platform between China and Pakistan, namely, China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences (CPJRC), was inaugurated here at Quaid-i-Azam University, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Speaking at the event, Cui Peng, Director-General, CPJRC, said researchers from the two countries will jointly study and assess the impact of geological disasters and climate change on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and local sustainable development. CPEC areas are



vulnerable to frequent natural hazards. Its environment and ecosystem are fragile, and socio-economic development is affected by multiple constraints, affecting local resilience and sustainable development. Addressing these challenges through research and supporting the sustainable development of CPEC is a common goal of scientists from both countries," he further said. "It is also a very good opportunity for academia in Pakistan and young students to have access to modern research in the field of Earth sciences in China," added Shahid Iqbal, assistant professor, Earth Sciences Department, Quaid-i-Azam University. The inauguration gathered a large number of students, scholars, and officials from both countries.

Global warming: Our mountains are losing ice

ISLAMABAD : Nepal's snow-capped mountains have lost close to one-third of their ice in over 30 years due to global warming, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that after a visit to the area near Mount Everest, the world's highest peak - a phenomenon being witnessed across the region including Pakistan. His statement came just days after a UN report warned that the glaciers - which ensure sustained water flow in its rivers - were at risk, also threatening the millions people depending on them. "The 90,000+ glaciers of the Himalayas, Karakoram and Hindu Kush mountains are at risk, and so are the nearly 870 million people that rely on them," the report said. It is a clear reminder that climate change is affecting Pakistan and other countries in the region at an alarming pace, which requires coordinated efforts at global level to first arrest and then reverse the trend. We, in Pakistan, are already witnessing less snowfall and shorter winters since 1980s, meaning that glaciers are melting at a rate faster than the snow dumped over the mountains during winters. Climate scientists say the earth's temperature has increased by an average of 0.74 degrees Celsius over the past 100 years, but warming across South Asia's Himalayas has been greater than the global averages.—DNA

Briefs

IRSA
releases
106,700
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 106,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 57,400 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1524.52 feet and was 126.52 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 29,100 cusecs and 52,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1203.55 feet, which was 153.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,600 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 63,000, 41,300, 44,100 and 13,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Kashmiris,
Palestinians
must be
allowed to
exercise right
of self-deter-
mination

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushal Hussein Mullick Tuesday appealed to the United Nations and other international rights organizations to give the people of Kashmir and Palestine their right to self-determination for permanent peace in the region. Talking to a Private news channel, she highlighted the plight of illegally detained Hurriyat leaders and activists languishing in different jails of India and the territory, adding that the Kashmiri detainees are being tortured in jails.

She mentioned that the Indian government wanted to hang Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik, who has been languishing in New Delhi's Tihar jail, in the month of December. Mushal said Indian troops are committing brutalities on the people of the occupied territory and reiterated that the resolution of the Kashmir dispute was imperative not only for durable peace in the world. India is using brutal acts and military force to suppress the freedom struggle of Kashmiris, but the morale of Kashmiris is high and they are bravely fighting these atrocities, she mentioned. India is killing Kashmiris under a nefarious plan to convert the majority of Muslims into a minority in the occupied territory, she added.—APP

TDCP finalizes
Thal Desert
Jeep rally's
preparations

ISLAMABAD: The Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) has finalized the preparations for conducting four-day Thal Desert Jeep Rally scheduled to be held from November 9-12.

Talking to APP here on Tuesday, a TDCP official said that the rally would attract over 100 male and female drivers across the country. The advisory had already been issued to drivers to facilitate them, he added.

The administration was utilizing all possible resources to ensure the success of the rally. All stakeholders were working together to make the event a memorable experience for participants and spectators alike, he said. He said the rally would start from Changa Manga tail-head Muhammadwala and cover a distance of 200 kilometers through Layyah, Muzaffargarh, and Kot Addu. The middle section of the track is located in Chobara Tehsil Layyah (South Punjab area). The official said participants should register their vehicles or jeeps and undergo a technical examination and medical check-up. A drivers/navigators conference and draws will be held on November 9. He said that the rally would feature a qualifying round and races in 11 categories, including a stock category race, women's categories.—DNA

100th Anniversary of the
Proclamation of Turkiye

The Turkiye ambassador said, The Republic of Turkiye signifies the reborn of a noble nation from its ashes that prefer to die instead of making compromises from its liberty, independence and honor

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkiye Mehmet Pacaci has said we are proud to have reached 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Republic of Turkiye. 'I commemorate Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of our Republic, and express our gratitude our holy martyrs and our veterans who fought for the same blessed cause and entrusted our beautiful homeland to us at the cost of their lives'. The Ambassador expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic. Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti was the chief guest while Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori also attended the event. The Turkiye ambassador further said, The Republic of Turkiye signifies the reborn of a noble nation from its ashes that prefer to die instead of making compromises from its liberty, independence and honor. We are proud of being a member of such a heroic nation who has the "character of independence". He said Turkish War of Independence was not only the success of the Turkish nation but also well documented part of our shared history with Pakistan. The sacrifices and selfless support by the South Asian Muslims during the Khilafat Movement, and their political and financial contributions to the Turkish sacred cause have and will never be forgotten, he added. Turkish Independence War has also become a profound inspiration for sub-continent Mus-



lims in their struggle for freedom. Founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e Azam

Muhammad Ali Cinnah expressed his appreciation for the Turkish struggle and its

exceptional leader, Atatürk, as builder of Modern Turkiye and an example to the

rest of the world, especially to the Muslim states in the Far East. a video

message by Turkish President H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on our National Day

and Centenary of the Republic was also screened on the occasion.

ANF seizes over 109 kg
drugs in two operations in
Sargodha & Lahore

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in two intelligence-based operations conducted simultaneously in Sargodha and Lahore managed to recover over 109 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that in an operation conducted near Salam Motorway Interchange, Sargodha, ANF recovered 48 kg hashish from a car. He said that an accused was signaled to stop the car near Kala Shah Kaku Motorway Toll Plaza, but he managed to flee. ANF team chased the accused

and caught him near Salam Interchange. A barrier was installed near Salam Interchange, Sargodha to arrest another member of the gang. When the drug smuggler saw the ANF barrier, he tried to go back towards the motorway. When chased, he threw the packets of drugs from the vehicle on the roadside green area. On checking, 30 kg hashish and 6 kg opium were recovered from the packets. The accused later left the vehicle near Babu Sabu Motorway Interchange Lahore and managed to escape. The spokesman informed that ANF adopting an

effective strategy, chased the accused and managed to net him later. During the search, another 25.2 kg hashish was recovered from the vehicle. During the investigation, the arrested accused confessed to working for the drug trafficking group and also confessed to smuggling drugs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab in the past. During the operations, a total of 103.2 kg hashish and 6 kg opium were seized. Cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigations are under process.—APP

ECP's special benches
to review objections

ISLAMABAD: Special benches constituted by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will address objections to preliminary delimitations at its Central Secretariat here on Wednesday and Thursday. The first bench is scheduled to examine petitions challenging delimitations in areas including Islamabad, Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Kashmir, Sialkot, Khuzdar, and Rajanpur on Wednesday. Meanwhile, the second bench will be dedicated to hearing petitions from Kurram, Khyber, Nankana Sahib, Attock, Jhelum, Kohat, and Korangi. On Thursday, the first bench will address objections from Malir, Sanghar, Swat, Haripur, Chakwal, and Pishin, while the second bench will focus on petitions concerning delimitations in Mardan, Karachi East, Musakhel, Lodhran, Nowshero Feroze, Hub, Lasbela, and Awaraan. A total of 1,324 objections have been received regarding constituency delimitations. The official release of constituency details is scheduled for November 30.—DNA

Awareness raising session held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to enhance awareness of international human rights systems and mechanism, AwazCDS-Pakistan and Pakistan Development Alliance jointly organized an event titled "Exploring the Global Framework for Human Rights and Its Operational Mechanisms" in Islamabad. This event gave participants a valuable opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of international human rights systems and mechanism with the context of human rights situation in Pakistan. Speakers and experts in the field guided participants through a series of discussions, enabling participants to gain a deeper understanding of this important topic whose im-

portance has been increased manifolds in recent times. Zia ur Rehman, Chief Executive Awaz CDS Pakistan welcomed the audience and shared the context of the introductory session on International Human Rights System & Mechanism. He shared that the purpose of such kind of initiative is to bring the civil society back to the human rights based approaches and agendas while imparting their services to the people of Pakistan and across the globe. He highlighted that according to the Pakistan Civic Space Monitor 2022 the civic spaces, freedom of expressions and opinion are critically obstructed and emphasized the CSOs to join hands together for civic rights and freedoms. Christine Chung, South Asia Team Leader, OHCHR,

thanked Awaz CDS for this opportunity of knowledge sharing and engagement. While overviewing human rights and international frameworks, she educated the audience on the terms, procedures and treaty bodies of UN agencies and how they carry out the systems for United Nations countries to ensure the protection of human rights. She highlighted the reporting role of Pakistan and the challenges. She specifically talked about treaty bodies and committees that work with international human rights treaties to ensure implementation. She said "these committees are working with Pakistan to help Pakistan comply with treating obligations. They monitor Pakistan's compliance with treaty obligations through various ways e.g

Kaira asks
all political
parties to
show unity

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and former Federal Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira Tuesday asked all political parties to show unity and collectively demand election commission of Pakistan to announce exact date for general elections. Talking to a private news channel, he urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce the schedule for general elections immediately to cope with "uncertainty" around the polls. He said that it is the ECP's responsibility to conduct free and fair elections to stabilize the economy and bring political stability to the country. "Election schedule should come as soon as possible, he said, adding, PPP is the only political party that always fought for the strengthening of democracy in the country but never clashed with state institutions". Replying to a question, he said the doors of negotiations were never closed in politics, adding that the PPP formed an alliance with its rivals for the sake of democracy and the Constitution. He said that the PPP did not want to increase bitterness with any political party but it could not work with the groups.—APP

Equal coverage to all political
parties should be PTV's priority'

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said providing equal coverage to all political parties should be Pakistan Television's priority. During a meeting with PTV News Current Affairs and Social Media teams, the minister was given a briefing about PTV News and current affairs programmes. Participation of the leaders from various political parties in current affairs' programmes will increase PTV's credibility, Murtaza Solangi maintained. He said Pakistan Television being the largest media organization in the country, had an important national role in elections. The minister said that PTV's role in clean, transparent and impartial elections will be unforgettable. He was informed that news coverage and its scope has grown exponentially over the past few years. The PTV team informed the minister that an increase in the number of bulletins by PTV as helped the viewers to be aware of the latest developments. In news, on-camera reporting and reports on social issues were being given special importance, the minister was informed. There has been a change in the news section not only in terms of quantity but also the style of presentation from National News Bureau Islamabad and other centers have changed, the PTV team informed him. Federal Secretary Information and Broadcasting Zahoor Ahmed and PTV Director Current Affairs Aun Sahi attended the meeting.—

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Enhancing Franco relations for fruitful engagement

Unlike what its name suggests, the 24th China-France Strategic Dialogue, which just concluded in Beijing, was not about “deliverables” alone but rather about the orientation of bilateral ties. As a significant follow-up to the 12th European Union-China High-Level Strategic Dialogue last month, the China-France engagement testifies to a shared interest in sustaining the mutually beneficial aspects of bilateral ties. The dialogue, featuring Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the French president’s diplomatic counselor, Emmanuel Bonne, was reportedly “friendly and in-depth”, and the consensus were broad and upbeat. The verbal consensus they reached are of great importance to both sides in these times of transformative changes. This dialogue and the earlier China-EU dialogue have injected new energy into China-France and China-EU cooperation while providing the anchor for the important relationships to weather the political turbulence sweeping across the world. Amid the strong headwinds of a divided world, a persistent China-France and China-EU bond would be critical to promoting world peace and stability. China is indeed under daunting pressure as Western economies impose technology blockade and try “de-risking” themselves from China-linked supply chains. Yet in this process, and in their effort to suppress China economically, France and the EU, too, have found their economies more than bruised. And even if the United States, which is seemingly behind all of this, is determined to do or pay whatever it takes for outcompeting China, much of the rest of the world is not ready to suffer collateral damage. As he did with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Wang Yi put considerable emphasis on the French and the EU’s independence in terms of foreign, and economic and trade policies during his discussion with Bonne. Calling China and France “independent major countries”, Wang told Bonne that China regards the EU as an independent and important part of the multipolar world, which echoes French President Emmanuel Macron’s call for Europe’s “strategic autonomy”, and Borrell’s for China to treat the EU as just that. What should be most consoling to Beijing are Bonne’s words that France has confidence in China’s economy, and has no intention of checking China’s development. Never before had such a statement carried so much weight for Beijing. In spite of Brussels defining Beijing as a “systemic rival” and calling for corresponding economic “dependencies”, Wang, as he did with Borrell, told Bonne that China and the EU are partners, not rivals, and their common interests far outweigh their differences. At the end of the day, France and the EU need to treat China “in a more pragmatic and rational manner, avoid external interference” in order to achieve mutual benefit.

Xiangshan forum: Seeking peace amid global power struggles

Some Western media outlets have tried to portray the ongoing Beijing-Xiangshan Forum that started as a platform for China and Russia to display a united stance against the United States and its allies. That is a gross distortion of the annual defense and security symposium Beijing has been hosting since 2006, as it is by no means an occasion calling for confrontation, but a platform striving for peace. That Beijing and Moscow chose to openly lay their respective concerns with Washington on the table at the forum for candid communication with the US side indicates there remains space for military-to-military dialogue aimed at avoiding miscalculations and deepening mutual understanding. Both the Ukraine crisis and the Palestinian question demonstrate how misjudgment, if allowed to become the basis for decision-making, can result in devastating conflicts. These lessons must be heeded by the stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific, so that flash points such as tensions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan question do not flare into conflict. But what these regional flash points – with the Taiwan question being China’s internal affair – have in common with the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza is that the US is playing an ugly role in them all, inciting and then exploiting tensions with the purpose of maintaining its regional dominance and global hegemony. That makes the US delegation a focus at the Xiangshan Forum, which was attended by representatives of more than 100 countries, regions and international organizations. More and more developing countries, the “silent majority” that the US has taken for granted for long, would like to use the forum as a platform to have their voices heard. Although the US delegation, led by the US Defense Department’s principle official for issues related to China, serves only as a messenger for the Pentagon at the event, the face-to-face communication with other stakeholders will leave them in no doubt as to how countries outside the US’ “circle of friends” view its interventionism based on its sense of exceptionalism and might-is-right security concept. Zhang Youxia, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of China, made clear in his opening address at the forum, that the Taiwan question is the primary concern of China. Zhang’s warning that the Chinese military will take resolute action to defend the country’s core interests on the Taiwan question, no matter who is trying to separate the island from its motherland, should not fall on deaf ears. The voices of nations critical of the US’ single-minded pursuit of hegemony should remind Washington that the US should not seek to impose its own will on others, and make its interests the exclusive purview of global governance. If the US continues to disregard the fact that it is a member of a global community with a shared future, like it or not, the modernizing of the “rules-based order” will be needlessly traumatic, and potentially catastrophic for all, including itself.



Hamas-Israel conflict, 360 view...

Qamar Bashir



UNSG, appalled by the killing of innocent Palestinian women elderly and children by the Israeli war machine sans mercy with heartless cruelty and brutality, said, “Hamas attacks did not take place in vacuum but they were the result of subjecting the Palestinian people to 56 years of suffocating occupation”. He added, “They have seen their land steadily devoured by settlements and plagued by violence; their economy stifled; their people displaced and their homes demolished. Their hopes for a political solution to their plight have been vanishing

Hamas’s unprecedented and lethal surprise attacks deep inside Israel, was surprising to everyone, given the potential for a strong response from Israel, backed by the USA and the West. It was the concern that I highlighted in my article titled “How Hamas Stunned Israel.” I’ve been seeking an answer to this question since, and that answer came from none other than United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) Antonio Guterres. His insights shed light on the intricate dynamics of this conflict, emphasizing the need for continued understanding and efforts to promote a peaceful resolution. UNSG, appalled by the killing of innocent Palestinian women elderly and children by the Israeli war machine sans mercy with heartless cruelty and brutality, said, “Hamas attacks did not take place in vacuum but they were the result of subjecting the Palestinian people to 56 years of suffocating occupation”. He added, “They have seen their land steadily devoured by settlements and plagued by violence; their economy stifled; their people displaced and their homes demolished. Their hopes for a political solution to their plight have been vanishing.” The answer, while welcomed by many, simultaneously stirred deep unease within the entire Western community, most notably in the USA and Israel. The UNSG’s just and apt stance on this contentious and potentially explosive issue should have been received with openness and positivity. However, Israeli officials reacted with anger, vehemently rejecting this wise statement and labeling it as a justification for terrorism. In retaliation, Israel canceled the scheduled meeting of Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen with Guterres while Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial, said the U.N. chief “failed the test.” The Israeli Foreign minister said “I will not meet with the UNSG as after the October 7 massacre, there is no place for a balanced approach. Hamas must be erased off the face of the planet!” Israel went to the extent of refusing issuance of visa to the UNSG and its representative to Israel. Israel, true to its statement, has publicly conveyed its intentions to annihilate Hamas, destroy its war machine and reduce its capacity of launching any attack on Israel in future and to rescue over 200 Israeli hostages. The official statement added that Hamas only knows one language, the language of military might therefore it said that coupled with diplomatic pressure, all out air, land and naval attacks have been ongoing on the Gaza strip, whereas, joint US-Israeli military rescue mission by using sophisticated and state of the art technology has been conceived and will be launched very soon. The principle stand taken by the UNSG, in the meantime, has started reverberating in many societies around the world. These societies unfettered by their governments’ reactions are reacting and protesting angrily in large numbers to the brutality and barbarism of Israel’s retaliation which as if today have killed around 9000 civilians and 3800 children and fatally injured over 21,000 civilians. Israel war machines have reduced the Palestinian Urban centers in rubble and underneath these rubble humanity is crushed, dead and is rotting while the attacks continue unabated without any end in sight. While responding to the question of Israel’s brutal attacks on hospitals in Gaza Strip, Israel Spokesperson said that Hamas is maintaining its command and control center under the hospitals and

other such civilian facilities therefore, all such facilities will be destroyed and raised to the ground. They once again warned and gave an ultimatum to the Hospitals and the patients, some of them on life support systems, many babies in incubators and many more crippled due to constant and uninterrupted Israel bombardments to evacuate immediately to the South of Gaza and while those who had the strength and means to evacuate, their caravans were attacked Israel fighter jets without any mercy. The statement of the UNSG was deeply rooted in the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, a protracted and multifaceted dispute having historical, political, and territorial factors. It originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Jewish immigration to Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Empire, increased, leading to tensions with the Arab population. The conflict was further fueled by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which expressed British support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. After World War II and the Holocaust, led to international support for the creation of a Jewish state and led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This event triggered a series of Arab-Israeli wars and further territorial disputes, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and gave birth to two organizations Hamas and Hezbollah deeply supporting and promoting Palestinian cause. The recent escalation of conflict between Hamas and Israel can be attributed to several factors. Hamas launched its attack in response to a culmination of long-standing grievances, including Israeli policies, violence at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, treatment of Palestinians, and the expansion of Israeli settlements. While Hamas justifies its actions as a response to these issues, Israel and the U.S. have rejected any moral equivalence between Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians and Israel’s efforts to defend itself. Hamas anticipated that its actions would draw Israel into a protracted conflict, potentially undermining the diplomatic normalization efforts and generating international sympathy for the Palestinian cause. The timing of the attack took advantage of domestic distractions in the Israeli government, allowing Hamas to act while Israel was internally preoccupied with the Islamic Resistance Movement, was founded in 1987 during the First Intifada (Palestinian uprising) against Israeli occupation. Hamas’s core objectives include the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, resistance against Israeli occupation, and the assertion of its Islamist ideology. Hezbollah, on the other hand, is a Shiite militant and political organization based in Lebanon. It was formed in the early 1980s with the backing of Iran as a response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Hezbollah is considered more powerful than the Lebanese army, and has engaged in conflicts with Israel, notably the 2006 Lebanon War. While the USA, UK and rest of the western governments are standing astutely and resolutely with Israel, Russia stands with Hamas. This prompted the West to draw comparisons between Hamas’s onslaught and Russia’s war against Ukraine arguing that one was “a terrorist organization that attacked Israel” and the other “a terrorist state that attacked

Ukraine.” The United States has historically been a strong ally of Israel and has often supported Israel in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This support includes financial aid, military assistance, and diplomatic backing. But on the other hand, Russia has long maintained close relations with Hamas and has never declared either wing of Hamas to be a terrorist group. Rather, eager to carve out a niche in the Middle East peace process, Russian diplomats have tried to unify different Palestinian factions, including Hamas, into a single political force in order to restart the peace process and promote a two-state solution. Unlike the west, USA and Russia, China has towed a neutral line since the war began and continues to call for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. In an official statement issued on October 8, the day after Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel, China’s foreign ministry called for a de-escalation in hostilities and for “relevant parties to remain calm, exercise restraint and immediately end the hostilities to protect civilians and avoid further deterioration of the situation”. Iran plays a crucial role in supporting Hamas financially and politically, although Iran has denied any direct involvement in the recent attack. However, Iran in an intimidating strong statement warned Israel of crossing the redline and threatened Israel of dire consequence if the war expand to other parts of Middle East especially Lebanon. Western states, such as Australia and New Zealand, have only declared the military wing of Hamas—the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades—to be a terrorist organization. Others, such as the United States, have not made this distinction. The support of Iran, Russia, and Turkey for Palestine, contrasting with the backing of Israel by the USA and Western nations, has indeed starkly divided the world into clear-cut positions, painting many shades of gray within the conflict. This division intensifies the complexities of the situation. The deployment of two U.S. aircraft carriers in Middle Eastern waters sends a clear message, serving as a warning against any misadventures. This stern posture raises the stakes, particularly with Iran and other Middle Eastern countries, creating an environment of heightened tension. Yet, amidst these developments, Russia and Iran remain resolute and undeterred by such deployments. This scenario underscores the intricate global dynamics at play and the fragility of peace in the region. Certainly, conflicts, especially those involving powerful nations, can be brutal, causing immense suffering. The world often witnesses self-proclaimed champions of human rights backing their interests. In this ongoing conflict, some powerful nations support Israel while others stand by Palestinian civilians. Yet, history shows that even the bloodiest wars ultimately find resolution at the negotiating table. It’s in the interest of all parties involved to put aside entrenched positions, attribute blame to the culprits, ensure justice for victims, and, most crucially, address the root causes, as underscored by the United Nations Secretary-General. Failure to do so could escalate this weeping conflict into a global conflagration, reminding us that the path to peace is always more desirable than the ravages of war.

The British public wants a general election now

Yossi Mekelberg

The trend among the British electorate is in one direction only. People are fed up not only with the current Sunak government but with the past 13 years of Conservative rule and, for most, change cannot come soon enough. The magnitude of Labour’s victories in these by-elections means that, for the first time since 1997, it is being seen as the governing party in waiting. Although there is no legal obligation to hold the next general election until January 2025

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak this month received the news of two thumping by-election defeats for his Conservative Party while he was on a trip to the Middle East, where he was trying – not very successfully – to defuse the volatile situation there. Considering the huge swings in both constituencies from Conservative to Labour, Sunak would probably rather be anywhere in the world but the UK, where support for his party is in complete meltdown. The trend among the British electorate is in one direction only. People are fed up not only with the current Sunak government but with the past 13 years of Conservative rule and, for most, change cannot come soon enough. The magnitude of Labour’s victories in these by-elections means that, for the first time since 1997, it is being seen as the governing party in waiting. Although there is no legal obligation to hold the next general election until January 2025, the public is crying out for a change of government and, with it, a change of course for the country. These by-elections took place following the resignations of two Conservative MPs in undignified circumstances. In one case, former Culture Minister Nadine Dorries finally quit after a prolonged and less than humble tantrum at being denied a peerage by the government. And in the other, Chris Pincher, a former deputy chief whip, resigned his seat in the House of Commons in September after losing an appeal against his suspension from Parliament after he sexually assaulted two men at a private members’ club last summer. Neither case covered the Tories with glory and further by-elections as a result of the party’s misbehaving are pending. The public is crying out for a change of government and, with it, a change of course for the country. In both constituencies, the Tories lost a huge majority – 24,000 and 19,000, respectively. Consequently, it is very tempting to prematurely declare the result of the next general election in favor of Labour and Keir Starmer as the next prime minister, as it looks like there is no way Sunak and the Conservatives could win a general election if they cannot defend such “safe” seats. However, the earliest we can expect the UK to go to the polls is in the spring and this is

a rather long time in politics. It means there is plenty of time for Labour to become complacent. Instead, it needs to continue to design credible policies that will enable the party to hit the ground running in the likelihood of it forming the next administration. Although there is always the danger of reading too much into by-election results – especially as the nature of Dorries and Pincher’s departures were scandalous and voters were keen to hand the government a bloody nose – the magnitude of the shift toward Labour suggests a profound change in the country’s mood. Many Conservative supporters expressed their frustration with the government by staying away from the polling stations, while others went as far as switching their vote to Labour. Naturally, fatigue creeps in when a party has been in power for so long, but on this occasion it is more than the public merely becoming tired with the same party. Rather, there is a sense that, in recent years, Conservative Party chaos, incoherence, incompetence and general mediocrity has taken the country backwards. The National Health Service is at breaking point, with waiting lists excessive to the point that they are detrimental to the public’s health; the soaring cost of living is hitting most those who can afford it the least; the education system is suffering from a chronic shortage of resources; and infrastructure generally is underfunded, with public buildings crumbling due to a lack of maintenance. The Tories are equally in need of some time on the opposition benches to reflect, reassess and regroup. So, it is not surprising that the public no longer believes the government’s promises and expresses its anger in by-elections and opinion polls. One indication that even Conservative MPs no longer expect their party to win the next general election is that about 50 of them have already declared their intention not to seek reelection, including some former senior members of the Cabinet. The recent party conference season was probably the last before the next general election. Parties look to these gatherings to rally their members, attract donations and give them a boost in the opinion polls, but

as far as the Tories are concerned their conference did nothing to change the huge polling gap in favor of Labour. One poll suggests that Labour’s lead has been extended and stands at 47 percent to 24 percent. One forecasting model suggests that this might be translated into a landslide election win, possibly even greater than Tony Blair’s 1997 victory. More significant is that approval ratings for Labour leader Starmer are becoming ever more favorable. In other words, voting Labour is no longer a protest vote against the mess that the Conservatives have got us all into, including Brexit, but a positive move demonstrating widespread support for Starmer’s leadership and Labour’s plans for governing the country. It is Starmer who keeps the party’s feet on the ground, warning the entire party machine, including his shadow Cabinet, MPs and activists, that nothing has been won yet and calling on them to contest every seat as if it were the one that ensured a majority in the next parliament. As much as the country needs a change of direction and Labour is eager to return to power, the Tories are equally in need of some time on the opposition benches to reflect, reassess and regroup. They are divided on almost every issue that matters to the country. The party has been hijacked by an extreme-right faction that is parochial, populist and devoid of ideas for getting the country out of the crises it is mired in. Moreover, the party is led by a prime minister who fails to inspire anyone, especially as he vacillates on almost every issue and makes promises that all polls indicate no one believes will be fulfilled. Above all, the mortal sin for any Conservative Party in government is to increase the tax burden, which is currently the largest since the Second World War, something its core supporters cannot forgive, while the rest of the country is suffering from failing public services despite paying more for them than ever. Labour and its supporters are right to be cautious and to fight on the doorstep for every vote, but for now it is the government that is doing much of the work for them, as Starmer and his team progress toward a possible landslide. —Sourced by Arab news.

Briefs

PML-N calls for early elections

FROM PAGE 01
"We will strengthen judicial institutions if we come into power," the PML-N supremo said, according to sources, while chairing his party's in-person meeting for the first time in four years at his JatiUmra residence. The three-time former prime minister will oversee the party's parliamentary board for distribution of tickets and will also lead the party's election campaign via his countrywide tours, a private channel reported. Earlier, media reported that the PML-N meeting was to mull over the current political situation, general elections, and other issues in the JatiUmra meeting. The huddle was also to discuss the launching of the party's manifesto ahead of the upcoming general elections.

Ambassador Rabei...

FROM PAGE 01
At the end of his speech, he explained that the entire population of the Gaza Strip has been living for weeks without electricity, water, gas, oil, or health supplies after the tightening of the Israeli siege, amid a shameful international deficit. The occupation forces only allowed a small number of trucks to enter over the course of a week, out of huge humanitarian supplies donated by Arab and Islamic countries and some other countries. For their part, the Arab ambassadors thanked Ambassador Rabei for the briefing, and expressed their absolute and unconditional solidarity with the Palestinian people in the face of the war, genocide, and crimes against humanity they are facing.

No ban on PTI, says...

FROM PAGE 01
body that would give a specific date for holding of general elections in the country. He said the delimitation process was a constitutional requirement and the previous parliament had legislated over the issue while the constitution mandated the procedure to be executed. The prime minister assured that the interim set up was ready to assist ECP in the process, adding that it was the fundamental mandate of ECP to give a date but the caretaker government could not dictate it in this regard. PM Kakar reiterated that Pakistan was persistently raising the Palestine issue at the global fora and the recent horrible, condemnable and inappropriate aggression by Israel was leading to human catastrophe in Gaza.

Israel used white...

FORM PAGE 01
civilian objects, and was therefore unlawful, said the organization. Cross-border hostilities in southern Lebanon have escalated significantly since 7 October. Israeli shelling in Lebanon has killed at least four civilians and 48 Hezbollah members so far. Hezbollah and other armed groups have also fired rockets at northern Israel, killing six Israeli soldiers and one Israeli civilian, according to the Israeli army. Amnesty International is investigating attacks by Hezbollah and other armed groups on northern Israel to determine whether they violated international humanitarian law.

ECP reserves verdict against...

FROM PAGE 01
The Chief Election Commissioner inquired about the evidence the petitioner had to substantiate the political affiliation. In response, the petitioner mentioned that Ahmad Cheema, the caretaker adviser, held a significant role in the previous government. Subsequently, the Election Commission reserved its decision after concluding the arguments.

Pakistan crush Bangladesh to keep WC hopes alive

Shaheen Shah Afridi and Wasim Jr led the bowling attack for Pakistan, taking three wickets each while Haris Rauf bagged two

SPORTS DESK

KOLKATA: Fakhar Zaman's brisk 81-run knock after a combined bowling effort propelled Pakistan to a thumping seven-wicket victory over Bangladesh in the ICC World Cup 2023. Opting to bat first, Bangladesh's batting lineup failed completely and could only raise 204 before bundling out in the 46th over despite Mahmudullah's half-century. Pakistan ace pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi, alongside Haris Rauf, ran through Bangladesh's top-order to reduce them to 23/3 in six overs. Litton Das and Mahmudullah then anchored the innings with a gutsy partnership for the fourth wicket. The pair added 79 runs to the total before Iftikhar Ahmed got rid of Das in the 21st over to halt Bangladesh's progress. Das fell shy of his well-deserved half-century, scoring 45 in 64 deliveries with the help of six boundaries. Mahmudullah then put together a brief partnership with captain Shakib Al Hasan before falling victim to a stunning delivery by Shaheen Shah Afridi. He remained the top-scorer for Bangladesh with a 70-ball 56, laced



up with six boundaries and a six. Skipper Shakib then took charge of Bangladesh's batting expedition with a cautious 43. His 64-ball featured four boundaries. All-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz then added valuable runs at the backend with a 30-ball 25 before perishing in the 44th over off Mohammad Wasim Jr. The right-arm pacer struck again in the same over, casting Taskin Ahmed, to book Bangladesh on a paltry total. Shaheen Shah Afridi and Wasim Jr led the bowling attack for Pakistan, taking three wickets each while Haris Rauf bagged two.

Murray bows out of Paris Masters in first round

PARIS: Andy Murray continued his losing streak against Alex de Minaur, as the Australian rallied back in the final set to advance to the second round at the Paris Masters. De Minaur keeps alive his chances of qualifying for the ATP Finals in Turin, as the 13th seed won five consecutive games in the last set in a 7-6(6) 4-6 7-5 victory,

his sixth win over Murray in their six meetings. Murray lost his serve in the opening game of the match, but came back to lead 5-4 before De Minaur won the opening set in a tiebreak. The Briton took the second set and at 5-2 up in the decider, looked set for victory. Despite serving twice for the match, Murray lost momentum as De Minaur's comeback saw him break his opponents serve three times winning the last five games to claim victory in the battle which lasted three hours. Murray smashed his racket in frustration after the agonising loss, and he has yet to win a match in this competition since winning the tournament in 2016. Frances Tiafoe, 14th seed,

was also in the running for the ATP Finals, but the American's dream died after suffering a straight-sets defeat to Alexander Bublik, the Russian winning 6-3 6-4. American ninth seed Taylor Fritz, meanwhile, advanced to the second round past Argentina's Sebastian Baez 6-1 6-4 before fellow American Tommy Paul, seeded 12th, came from a set down to beat Frenchman Richard Gasquet 0-6 6-2 7-6(6). Alejandro Davidovich Fokina defeated 15th seed Ben Shelton, the Spaniard overcoming the American 7-6(4) 5-7 6-3, while Karen Khachanov recorded a routine win over Max Purcell, the 16th seed Russian winning 6-4 6-4 against the Australian. World number one Novak Djokovic, defending champion Holger Rune, Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev are among the main seeds who received a bye into the second round. — Agencies



Sultah Johar Hockey Cup Pakistan to face Australia in Semi Final

DNA

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia concluded the group stage of Sultan of Johor Cup hockey with a 2-3 defeat to Pakistan in Johor Baru on Tuesday. Pakistan will now face Australia in the Semi Final which shall be played on Friday, November 3. Match will start at 3 pm PST. Pakistan started aggressively by taking a 3-0 lead in the first half through Abuzar (13th-minute field goal), Ahmad Arbaz (21st-minute penalty corner) and Mohd Khan (24th-minute PC) strikes. The Young Tigers showed stronger resistance in the second half, where Shahmie Irfan Suhaimi opened the scoring through a 47th-minute PC. Shafiq Ikmal Daniel scored Malaysia's first field goal of the tournament when he struck in the 51st minute.

Asian Taekwondo Open C'ship kicks off from today

Top taekwondo athletes from around the world will showcase their skills in the senior category competitions of Kyorugi and Poomsae at the Liaquat Gymnasium

ISLAMABAD: The Comboxx 5th Asian Taekwondo Open Championship for Senior Poomsae and Kyorugi is all set to commence at the Pakistan Sports Complex on November 1. This prestigious event, organized by the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation (PTF), will run until November 5, featuring the participation of 27 countries vying for the coveted top honors. A remarkable 27 countries, in addition to 26 regional and provisional teams, have registered to compete in this mega event, underscoring the global significance of this championship. The PTF had the privilege of hosting four Asian Taekwondo Union Courses from October 27 to 31, held at Hamidi and Rodham Halls. This event marks a historic moment for Pakistan, as it welcomes the first-ever participation of Prof. Kyu Seok Lee, President of the Asian Taekwondo Union (ATU), in the country's taekwondo history. The opening ceremony is scheduled for November 2, with the grand closing ceremony set to take place on November 5. Top taekwondo athletes from around the world will showcase their skills in the senior category competitions of Kyorugi and Poomsae at the Liaquat Gymnasium. It's worth mentioning that the PTF also successfully organized the 4th Asian Open in Pakistan last year, contributing to the promotion of a positive image of Pakistan through sports. The participation of 27 countries, including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Great Britain, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Türkiye, UAE, Uzbekistan, and The Humanitarian Foundation (THF), promises to make this extravaganza a spectacular showcase of taekwondo excellence and global unity. —DNA

Messi wins eighth Ballon d'Or, Bonmati claims women's

This is a gift to the whole Argentina team for what we achieved," said Messi

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

PARIS: Lionel Messi won the eighth Ballon d'Or of his remarkable career at a glittering ceremony in Paris, while Spain's World Cup-winning star Aitana Bonmati took the women's prize. For Messi, the trophy rewards, above all else, his inspirational performances at last year's World Cup in Qatar, when he dragged Argentina to victory, scoring seven goals and being named the tournament's best player. It was the crowning moment of his astonishing career, and it allowed him to see off stiff competition, in particular from Erling Haaland and Kylian Mbappe, to take the award on the stage of the Chatelet Theatre in Paris. It was a return to the French capital after his departure from Paris Saint-Germain in June and his subsequent

move to Inter Miami in Major League Soccer. "This is a gift to the whole Argentina team for what we achieved," said Messi on stage after receiving his award from David Beckham, the co-owner of Inter Miami. Messi dedicated his eighth Ballon d'Or trophy to late Argentina legend Diego Maradona, who would have celebrated his 63rd birthday on Monday. "Happy birthday Diego. This is for you too," he said. Messi benefits from a recent change which means the award is based on a player's record over the last season, rather than over the calendar year. He won despite an underwhelming final season at PSG, even if he was a Ligue 1 title winner. Mbappe was the star player in that team, scoring 41 goals, and was also the World Cup's top scorer with eight goals, including a hat-trick in the final which

France lost to Argentina on penalties. Yet he fell just short for the Ballon d'Or, finishing third, while Norway striker Haaland came

and Champions League. Messi is 36 and won his first Ballon d'Or in 2009. With eight, he is now three ahead of his old rival Cries

the running for the prize, which is voted for by one journalist in each of the top 100 nations in the FIFA ranking. "I am not thinking about the long-term future. I am just enjoying the day to day at the moment," he said. Messi will struggle to hold off the next wave of superstars, led by Mbappe, Haaland and Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham, but his World Cup performances made his victory this time feel inevitable. The women's prize seemed even more clear cut, as Bonmati was rewarded for starring as Spain won the World Cup in Australia in August. The 25-year-old midfielder was named the best player at the World Cup as the Spanish team overcame off-field turbulence, including protests against their national federation and coach Jorge Vilda, to lift the trophy. Bonmati also starred as Barcelona won

the Champions League last season and was recently named as the UEFA Women's Player of the Year. "It is difficult to improve on this. It has been a unique year," she told Media reporters. "If anyone said to me when I was little that I would play at the Camp Nou, win the World Cup, two Champions Leagues, a Ballon d'Or, a UEFA award, these are extraordinary things." She was one of four members of the triumphant Spain team to feature among the 30 nominees, with Alba Redondo, Salma Paralluelo and full-back Olga Carmona, who netted the winner in the final, all shortlisted. Last year's Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Puteallas, also part of that Spain side, was not nominated after missing almost all of last season with a knee injury. Australia's Sam Kerr came second with Paralluelo in third place.



second after scoring 52 goals in 53 games for the Manchester City team that won the treble of English Premier League, FA Cup

tiano Ronaldo, the next most decorated player in the history of the award. It remains to be seen if Messi will again feature in

Cipher case: Court starts Imran...

FROM PAGE 08
Judge Zulqarnain, in response to PTI's application for the provision of the complete challan, allowed the defence team to view challan documents while barring them from taking pictures or making copies. The case has been adjourned till November 7. The court will formally record the witnesses' statements at the next hearing. Last week, the PTI chairman's plea seeking a halt in proceedings against him in the cipher case was rejected by the IHC. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq directed the special court to ensure a "fair trial" against the former prime minister. Separately, the IHC also rejected the former prime minister's pleas seeking bail and cancellation of the first information report (FIR) in the cipher case on Friday.

Be respectful with...

FORM PAGE 01
children and elders with special care and respect" theminister said, adding that the arraignments for food and medical facilities were made in the holding centers. The deadline for undocumented immigrants including Afghan refugees for voluntary return ended on October 31 after which the government's crackdown against them had started in full swing, he added. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has collected entire data of undocumented immigrants in the country through geo-fencing, the minister said, adding that those who still tried to escape government's amnesty would be caught from their hideouts. Bugti also warned of strict action against locals helping the immigrants and providing them shelter. "Any Pakistani who will rent his house to illegal immigrant will be considered as partner in crime and treated equally according to the law," he added.

Absar accuses...

FROM PAGE 01
The review petitions were filed by the Ministry of Defence, Pemra, Intelligence Bureau (IB), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), MuttahidaQaumi Movement (MQM), Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, EjazulHaq and others. Surprisingly, as the apex court three-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi-Faez Isa and comprising Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Aminuddin Khan is all set to hear the set of review petitions against the top court's 2019 order, the federal government, Pemra, Sheikh Rashid, ECP, IB and others decided to withdraw their pleas and submit their responses in writing and explain the reasons behind their decision. Taking up the set of petitions on September 28, the CJP had expressed his annoyance after many sought to withdraw their review pleas and asked "Why everyone is so scared?" The top court had directed all the parties to submit their replies by October 27. The top court will resume hearing the petitions on November 1.

Over 500 casualties... in Jabalia massacre

FROM PAGE 01
the camp, each one weighing more than 1,000 kilograms. He added that the majority of those killed were women and children. More than 120,000 citizens inhabit the Jabalia refugee camp, whose total area is 1.4 square kilometer. The spokesman for the Ministry of Health, Ashraf al-Qudra, confirmed that 18 massacres have been carried out in the Gaza Strip over the past 24 hours, resulting in the killing of 216 people. 926 massacres have been carried out in the Gaza Strip, he said, leading to thousands of martyrs, while 2,000 of them are still under rubble, including 1,100 children.

Briefs

China coop in
Balticconnector
investigation

OSLO : Finland's prime minister Petteri Orpo on Tuesday said China was cooperating in the Finnish investigation of the Hong Kong-flagged NewNew Polar Bear vessel's role in the Oct. 8 damage to the Balticconnector pipeline.

Finnish police leading the pipeline investigation have named the NewNew Polar Bear container carrier as the prime suspect in damaging the gas pipeline early on Oct. 8, and said it was too early to tell if this was an accident or a deliberate act. A large anchor, believed to belong to the NewNew Polar Bear, was found near the pipeline, and the investigators said the pipe was likely broken as it was dragged across the sea bed. "We have opened diplomatic discussions with the Chinese and also we have started cooperation with Chinese authorities. And they have promised, and they have said, that they want to do cooperation," Petteri Orpo told reporters in Oslo.

"We are starting to work together. And the next few days I think (will) show how it goes. But now we have to be patient. We have to get a clear picture of what has happened before (drawing) any conclusions." China has said it was willing to provide the necessary information in accordance with international law.—DNA

Advantest
cuts profit
forecast due
to Smart
phone

TOKYO : Japanese chip testing equipment company Advantest Corp (6857.T) on Tuesday downgraded its full-year operating profit forecast by 24% compared to July as recovery in the smartphone market takes longer than expected. Advantest sees operating profit of 80 billion yen (\$532 million) in the year ending in March, down 52%, pointing to softer demand for leading-edge test systems and higher costs. The company said it expects investment in generative artificial intelligence to boost tester demand over the medium term. "We will sustain our investment to address future technologies," CEO Yoshiaki Yoshida told an earnings briefing. Industry bright spots include demand for high bandwidth memory (HBM) chips which has boosted South Korea's SK Hynix (000660.KS) with rivals circling. "As we go into next year we are going to continue to see very large growth in HBM and we should benefit from our market position," Chief Operating Officer Douglas Lefever said.—Agencies

US to expel
4nations from
trade pro-
gram

WASHINGTON : U.S. President Joe Biden said on Monday that he intends to end the participation of Gabon, Niger, Uganda and the Central African Republic in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade program. Biden said he was taking the step because of "gross violations" of internationally recognized human rights by the Central African Republic and Uganda. He also cited Niger and Gabon's failure to establish or make continual progress toward the protection of political pluralism and the rule of law. "Despite intensive engagement between the United States and the Central African Republic, Gabon, Niger, and Uganda, these countries have failed to address United States concerns about their non-compliance with the AGOA eligibility criteria," Biden said in a letter to the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Biden said he intends to terminate the designation of these countries as beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries under the AGOA, effective Jan. 1, 2024. He said he will continue to assess whether they meet the program's eligibility requirements. Launched in 2000, AGOA grants exports from qualifying countries duty-free access to the U.S. market. It is set to expire in September 2025, but discussions are already under way over whether to extend it and for how long.—APP

ICCI condemns massive
gas price hike impact

President ICCI said that already the unjustified hike in the prices of electricity had forced people to come to the streets in August this year and said that the unprecedented hike in gas tariffs would make their lives more miserable

MEHTAB PIERZADA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the government has made an unprecedented hike of up to 3900 percent in fixed monthly charges and 194 percent in consumers rates of gas that would bring a massive wave of inflation for the common man and prove to be a big blow to the industry leading to closure of many industries across the country. He said this while presiding over a meeting of the ICCI Executive Body at Chamber House. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the economy of Pakistan is still struggling for recovery and it is high time that the government should focus on providing affordable energy tariffs for business and industry to revive the economy. However, instead of promoting ease of doing business, the electricity and gas tariffs have been increased manifold in Pakistan causing massive hike in cost of doing business and making our exports more uncompetitive in the international market. He said that the government is passing on the burden of



poor performance and financial losses of the electricity and gas companies to the end consumers by increasing their tariffs, which is not a right approach. He stressed that instead of increasing power tariffs, the government should focus on addressing the inefficiencies of electricity and gas companies and plug their leakages to make them efficient. President ICCI said that already the unjustified

hike in the prices of electricity had forced people to come to the streets in August this year and said that the unprecedented hike in gas tariffs would make their lives more miserable besides badly affecting the business and investment activities in the country. He urged that the government should reconsider the increase in gas prices to save the people and the businesses from further troubles.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that gas is a key input to the manufacturing activities of many industries and the latest hike in its price would lead to closure of many industries that would further weaken the economy. He said that Pakistan needs to boost industrialization to improve its economy, but such decisions would cause deindustrialization in the country and damage the economy.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the prices of electricity and gas in Pakistan are almost highest in the region due to which it has become very difficult for the private sector to compete effectively in the international market. He said that the government in consultation with the stakeholders should revise electricity and gas prices to make them affordable for all consumers.

Central Asia, South Asia
legal forum hosts China event

KASHI : Central Asia & South Asia Legal Forum, a prominent gathering of legal and administrative experts, kicked off in Kashi, China. The event, organized to foster legal cooperation and dialogue, brought together distinguished leaders and speakers from the region. The forum's esteemed moderators included Anniwaer Tuerxun, Deputy Secretary of the CPC Committee of Kashi and Administrative Commissioner of Kashi Prefecture. Anniwaer Tuerxun will guide discussions and deliberations on key legal and administrative topics. Aierken Tuniyazi, Deputy Secretary of the CPC Com-

mittee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Chairman of the Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, took the stage as a speaker. His insights and experiences are expected to contribute significantly to the forum's discussions. Li Yifei, Deputy Secretary of the CPC Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Secretary of the CPC Committee of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, also moderated discussions, further enriching the discourse with her expertise. The China (Kashi) - Central Asia & South Asia Legal Forum serves as an essential platform for

regional leaders to exchange ideas and strategies in the legal and administrative domains. This year's event promises to facilitate meaningful conversations and cooperation for the benefit of all involved regions. Speakers: (1) Wang Chen, President of China Law Society (2) Ma Xingrui, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of CPC. Secretary of the CPC Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (3) Bishowambhar Pd.Shrestha, Chief Justice of Nepal (4) Sanjaykumar Rajaream, Attorney General of Sri Lanka (5) Sharipov Nurseryk Karimovich, Chairman of the Civil

Trial Commission of the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan (6) Yang Wanning, Member of the CPC Group and Vice President of the Supreme People's Court (7) Ge Xiaoyan, Member of the CPC Group and Deputy Procurator General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate (8) Yuan Gujie, Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Committee of Guangdong Province, Secretary of the Politics and Law Committee of Guangdong Province, President of the Guangdong Province Law Society (9) Anniwaer Tuerxun, Deputy Secretary of the CPC Committee of Kashi, Administrative Commissioner of Kashi.—APP

Ukraine prepared
to defend against
Bakhmut offensive

KYIV : KYIV military officials said on Monday that Russia has bulked up its forces around the devastated city of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine and has switched its troops from defence to offence, but Ukraine has been preparing to repel the attacks. Russia captured Bakhmut, theatre of some of the bloodiest fighting of the 20-month-old war, in May. Ukraine launched a counteroffensive in June aimed at retaking occupied land in the country's south and east, including Bakhmut. "In the Bakhmut area, the enemy has significantly strengthened its grouping and switched from defence to active actions," General Oleksandr Syrskyi, Ukraine's commander of ground forces, wrote on Telegram. Volodymyr Fityo, head of communications for Ukraine's ground forces command, said Russian forces had been preparing since early this month to retake positions around Bakhmut lost during the Ukrainian counteroffensive. "We saw this, the intelligence reported everything. We had been preparing, strengthening our defensive positions, engineering fortifications and pulling up reserves," Fityo told Reuters by telephone. "This does not come as a surprise for us." Both men said Russian forces were particularly active near the Ukrainian-held town of Kupiansk in the northeast, where Fityo said Russia had numerical superiority. In its nightly report, the Ukrainian General Staff said Kyiv's forces remained on the offensive near Bakhmut.—APP

Hong Kong leader
defends new
election rules

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader defended the rules for upcoming local elections as open and fair after an electoral overhaul effectively barred the city's remaining pro-democracy activists from joining the race. The city's largest pro-democracy party, the Democratic Party, will be absent in December's district council election for the first time since its establishment in 1994. Party chair Lo Kin-hei said he and other members could not secure enough nominations under the new rules that authorities introduced to ensure that "patriots administer Hong Kong." Other smaller groups from the camp had the same problem. Chief Executive John Lee said at a weekly news briefing that candidates have to respect the decisions of the people they sought nomination from. "It is up to you to ensure that you can convince the person you want to convince," he said. The district councils were the last major political representative bodies chosen by the public. Under the electoral overhaul, most directly elected seats in the municipal-level organization have been eliminated. The lack of participation from pan-democrats reflects the dwindling space for the city's pro-democracy movement under a government crackdown on dissidents following the anti-government protests in 2019. To enter the race, candidates have to secure endorsements from at least nine members of local committees that are packed with pro-government figures. Some pro-government politicians, including lawmaker Michael Tien, also said it was challenging for their groups to secure nominations. Elections for the district council seats typically draw little international attention as the councilors mainly handled municipal matters, such as organizing construction projects and ensuring that public facilities are in order. But the councils took on importance after the city's pro-democracy camp won a landslide victory in the last poll at the height of the 2019 protests. The camp then hailed its strong gains in the race as a victory for the Hong Kong people.—DNA

King Charles visits Kenya
amid colonial concerns

WEB DESK

NAIROBI: King Charles III and Queen Camilla began a state visit to Kenya on Tuesday, facing widespread calls for an apology over Britain's bloody colonial past. Although the four-day trip has been billed as an opportunity to look to the future and build on the cordial modern-day ties between London and Nairobi, the legacy of decades of British colonial rule looms large. It is the 74-year-old British head of state's first visit to an African and Com-

monwealth nation since ascending the throne in September last year on the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II. The royal couple, who arrived late Monday, were welcomed at a formal ceremony on Tuesday by Kenyan President William Ruto, who has hailed the visit as a "significant opportunity to enhance collaboration" in various fields. The British High Commission said the tour, which follows trips to Germany and France earlier this year, will "spotlight the strong and dynamic partnership be-

tween the UK and Kenya." But it will also "acknowledge the more painful aspects" of Britain's historic relationship with Kenya as the East African country prepares to celebrate 60 years of independence in December. This includes the 1952-60 "Emergency," when colonial authorities brutally suppressed the Mau Mau guerrilla uprising, one of the bloodiest insurgencies against British rule. At least 10,000 people — mainly from the Kikuyu tribe — were killed, although some historians

and rights groups claim the true figure is higher. Tens of thousands more were rounded up and detained without trial in camps where reports of executions, torture and vicious beatings were common. The royal visit also comes as pressure mounts in some Caribbean Commonwealth countries to remove the British monarch as head of state, and as republican voices in the UK grow louder. Kenya nevertheless has special resonance for the royal family.

Masood Khan slams murder of Pakistani doctor

Pakistani envoy said her killing in Conroe, Houston, was "shocking" and a "senseless act of violence."

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has strongly condemned the murder of Dr. Talat Jehan Khan, a Pakistani-American paediatrician, in a Texas town on Saturday, hoping that a swift inquiry into the case would deliver justice for the victim. In a statement issued on Monday, the Pakistani envoy said her killing in

Conroe, Houston, was "shocking" and a "senseless act of violence." Dr. Talat Jehan Khan, 52, a 1966 graduate of the Sindh Medical College, Karachi, was sitting on a picnic table near her home when she was stabbed multiple times to death, according to police. Authorities charged Miles Joseph Fridrich, a 24-year-old man, in her murder. Although his motive remains unclear, community members and organizations see it as a hate crime. "We have

not found any evidence to link this to a hate crime," Conroe Police Department Sergeant David Dickenson told CNN. He said the investigation is ongoing. However, a Muslim advocacy group and an anti-hate organization are calling for police to watch the case closely. "We are unsure at this moment if this was a hate crime; however, given the tragic circumstances, we are paying very close attention to the investigation,"

the Council on American-Islamic Relations' Houston office said in a statement. In his statement, Ambassador Masood Khan expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family, saying, "Dr. Talat Jehan Khan was a dedicated healthcare professional and a beloved member of the Pakistani-American community." He also spoke to Dr. Arshad Rehan, President of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent

of North America (APPNA) to express his sorrow over her death. In his personal messages to the grieving family, the ambassador assured all possible support of the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington and the Consulate in Houston in completing the last rites of the deceased. The Consul General of Pakistan in Houston will attend the funeral tomorrow, a Pakistani embassy press release said.

Chinese
Company
arranges
two-day
Building-
material Expo

RIYADH : A Chinese Company will arrange here a two-day Building-material Expo on Nov 6. The expo will take place at Riyadh International Convention Exhibition Centre (RICEC). At the exhibition various varieties of building material will be displayed.

On November 06 the Expo will be held from 04:00 PM to 09:30 PM. While on the second Day, it will take place from 01:00 PM to 09:30 PM. It may be mentioned here that Shandong Building material company was established in 2019 in Chinese city of Weifang, Shandong Province. This company is considering the biggest one in China in producing building material. Annual production capacity of this company is more than 60 thousand tons. According to the company's officials, they focus more on producing quality products. For this purpose they have set up a comprehensive Quality Control system. The company is also known as a high-Standard skill of Silicon salient manufactures. This company has achieved excellent position in research and development. They are exporting their material to more than 30 countries including India, Australia, Iraq, Syria, Vietnam, Kuwait and Afghanistan. This company producing the material according to the needs of their customer, home and abroad. Shandong Nice Building Materials CO., Ltd is one of the biggest professional silicone sealant manufacturers in China, specialized in research and development, producing and selling high grade building sealant, such as acetic silicone sealant, neutral silicone sealant, weatherproof silicone sealant, structural silicone sealant, acrylic sealant, PU sealant and PU foam spray.—Agencies

Saudi climate
tech startups
\$68m
investment

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia attracted \$68 million in venture capital investment for climate technology startups from 2018 through the first half of 2023, a report has discovered. The funds were spread across 21 deals, according to research by venture data firm MAG-NITT. Titled "State of Climate Tech VC," the report disclosed the combined venture capital funding for the Middle East and North Africa region and Turkey amounted to \$651 million over five years, distributed across 225 deals. The research emphasized the region's growing commitment to climate action, as evidenced by hosting two consecutive United Nations Conference of the Parties events. "In addition to COP, Saudi Arabia leads further efforts with the Middle East Green Initiative," the report added. The UAE emerged as the front-runner in funding value, amassing \$401 million from 45 deals. Moreover, startups in Turkey secured \$124 million across 80 deals during the same timeframe. Egyptian ventures garnered \$42 million through 35 deals, while Tunisia saw a total of \$6 million from 6 deals. The study also highlighted that climate tech now constitutes 5 percent of the region's total venture capital funding, marking an elevenfold growth over the last five years. The sector peaked last year, with \$270 million accumulated from 50 deals. In contrast, the first half of 2023 saw an investment of \$40 million spread over 30 deals.—APP

Tunisia says
5 prisoners
have escaped

TUNIS : Tunisian interior ministry said that five "dangerous" prisoners have escaped on Tuesday from a prison near the capital, in a rare such incident for the country. The ministry published photos of the escaped prisoners and called on citizens to contact the police when they see them to prevent "terrorist acts".—Agencies

Briefs

'Gas tariff hiked steeply due to circular debt'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker government in a press conference on Tuesday said the reasons behind the caretaker cabinet's approval of the steep hikes in fixed monthly charges and consumer rates for natural gas would help ease the fiscal deficit. In a press conference, Energy Minister Muhammad Ali stated that for the past decade, Pakistan has been unable to meet the local demand for gas without the help of imports, which had resulted in a significant decrease in Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. "Because of rising fiscal deficit, we were prone to more borrowing," he stressed. "These loans are making us more vulnerable to inflation." For the past decade, most of the international companies for natural gas exploration—except for four—have left Pakistan because of losses, he said, rendering Pakistan unable to meet its demands without imports. "In January 2022 inflation was 13pc and in January 2023, it was 27pc." He emphasised—with the help of bar charts—the importance of curbing circular debt. "Circular debt has increased to Rs2,100 billion," he added. "And if we did not stop it, it would have gone to Rs2,400 billion." The energy minister further broke down how the increase in gas price rates affected different sectors.

Taliban asked to free 2 women activists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UN experts on Tuesday demanded the Taliban immediately release two women rights defenders who have been in detention for more than a month with no reason given for their arrest. The Taliban have barred women from most areas of public life and work and stopped girls from going to school beyond the sixth grade as part of harsh measures they imposed after taking power in 2021, as US and NATO forces were pulling out of Afghanistan following two decades of war. UN experts, including the special rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, described the release of Neda Parwan and Zholia Parsi and their family members as an urgent matter. They have not been granted legal representation, charged with a crime or brought before a court. "We are increasingly concerned about their physical and mental wellbeing," the experts said in a statement. They urged Taliban authorities to demonstrate respect for rights and freedoms and said there was no justification for the detention.



LAHORE: Caretaker PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar visits the newly constructed Emergency Ward during his visit to Mayo Hospital, in Lahore. – DNA

India opp says gov't tried to hack phones

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Some Indian opposition leaders have accused the government of trying to hack into their phones after receiving warning messages from Apple. Apple's alert said it believed the recipient was "being targeted by state-sponsored attackers". It did not specify who the attackers could be. Federal ministers dismissed the allegations, with one calling it "destructive politics". But he added that the government would "investigate to get to the bottom of these notifications". So far, around a dozen opposition politicians have confirmed that they got the message from Apple. The list has MPs including Shashi Tharoor and KC Venugopal from the Congress party, Mahua Moitra from the Trinamool Congress and Priyanka Chaturvedi from the Shiv Sena UBT.

HRCP fears Afghan deportations can trigger a 'humanitarian crisis'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on Tuesday expressed concern over the government's decision to expel undocumented foreigners—most of whom comprise Afghans—and urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure protection for Afghan refugees. Earlier this month, the government gave an ultimatum to all undocumented immigrants to leave Pakistan by Oct 31 or else, risk imprisonment and deportation to their respective countries. While the decision had prompted criticism from Afghanistan and several other quarters, the caretakers insist that it is not aimed at any particular ethnic group. There are more than two million undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan, with at least 600,000 of them leaving Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover in August 2021. In a letter addressed to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi today, HRCP Chairperson Hina Jilani said the move to expel Afghans could "trigger a humanitarian crisis". "The decision amounts to forced repatriation, which is not recognised under international customary law, and will invariably affect vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, which include women, children, the elderly, persons living with disabilities, persons from low-income groups, and Afghans at risk because of their professions—many of whom fled Afghanistan after the Afghan Taliban took over the government in August 2021," the letter stated. It noted that despite criticism from human rights organisations, the government had not shown any signs of reconsidering its decision and had gone so far as to prevent civil society members from expressing their views on the matter.

US requests not to deport 25,000 'vulnerable' Afghans

ISLAMABAD: The United States has shared a list of 25,000 Afghans with a request not to deport them as they may face retribution as Pakistan is set to launch a drive against all foreigners living in the country illegally after the expiry of November 1 deadline. The 25,000 Afghans, who moved to Pakistan after the Afghan Taliban returned to power in August 2021, had worked for the US or its contractors during its military campaign in the war-torn country. These individuals are eligible for special visas and asylum to the US as their association with the US-led foreign forces could lead them into trouble at the hands of the Afghan Taliban government. Since the government announced a policy to evict all illegal foreigners mostly Afghans, Washington is in touch with Islamabad at the highest level to ensure such Afghans are not deported. A senior US official confirmed that Washington had shared with Pakistan a list of 25,000 Afghans, who were eligible for relocation and resettlement in the US. "Helping facilitate the safe and efficient resettlement and relocation of eligible Afghans to the US is a priority for the United States. As Secretary Blinken has said, it's a deeply held commitment, and an on-going one," said the senior US official. – DNA

Coop in industries to enhance Pakistan-China friendship



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China to Pakistan H.E Jiang Zaidong called on Caretaker Federal minister for power and petroleum Muhammad Ali here today. Minister appreciated the continuous engagement of China in energy sector with Pakistan. He extended his congratulations for successful 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that was held earlier this month in China. H.E Ambassador remarked that BRI has become a new guidance for international development, In-

dustries of both sides can benefit from this cooperation. Ambassador welcomed the proposal of Energy Minister to organize a delegation of private companies to meet with Chinese enterprises in order to boost cooperation. Caretaker Federal minister further remarked that Pakistan's future energy landscape will revolve around indigenous and renewable sources. Renewables, transmission network and DISCOs could be some of the prime areas for linkages between China and Pakistan. Utilizing the cutting edge technology of Chinese corporations, Coal Gasification plant in Thar can help bolster energy supply to industry.

OGRA announces reduction in LPG prices

For those using domestic cylinders, the price has seen a significant reduction as well

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) on Tuesday announced reduction in Liquefied Petroleum Gas

(LPG) prices for the month of November. According to a notification issued by a regulatory body, the LPG price would go down by Rs9.95 per kilogram and it would now be sold out at Rs 260.98 per kilogram. For those using domestic cylinders, the price has seen a significant reduction as well. The cost of a domestic cylinder has been slashed by Rs 170.47. The Ogra's determination for November sets the price of an 11.8 kg cylinder at Rs 2,962. This marks a notable decrease from the previous month when the domestic cylinder was priced at Rs 3,079.64.

Minister assures PPP Every party has full right to participate in elections

Caretakers to provide all possible support and facilities to ECP in conducting fair polls, says minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Responding to the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) concerns in connection with the level-playing field for all political parties, caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday clarified that equal opportunities would be provided to all political parties and every party had full right to participate in the elections. A day earlier, PPP senior leader Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah—without naming the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)—said that the polls would have no credibility if one party was kept away from the electoral

process in the country. With the time of general elections drawing close, the PPP has persistently voiced concerns regarding the absence of equal opportunities to prove itself ahead of the polls. Last month, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had laid the blame for being denied a level-playing field on the PML-N. On another occasion, without naming the PML-N, Bilawal had taken a subtle jibe at a political party, by saying that it is "really a weird thing that a certain party has given the date for the election". During a meeting with PPP Senator Salim Mandviwala today, the interim information minister said the caretaker government would provide all possible support and facilities to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in conducting free and fair elections. Matters of mutual interest, the current political and economic situation of the country including the upcoming elections were discussed in the meeting. The minister said the ECP was responsible for conducting elections in the country.

Cipher case: Court starts Imran, Qureshi's trial

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A special court formed under the Official Secrets Act on Tuesday commenced the trial of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The duo was indicted in the cipher case on October 23—despite filing a petition under CrPC 265-D to stop the indictment—after the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) booked them for violating the secret law by misusing and misplacing the diplomatic cable based on conversations between Pakistan's envoy to Washington and the US diplomat. The FIA, in its challan, stated that the former prime minister and the vice-chairman were found guilty in the matter and requested the court to conduct their trial and sentence them in the case. The investigation agency also maintained that Khan had a copy of the cipher but he did not return it. The controversy first emerged on March 27, 2022, when Imran, while addressing a public rally, waved a letter before the crowd, claiming that it was a cipher from a foreign nation that had conspired with his political rivals to have the PTI government overthrown. During today's hearing, witnesses, of whom nine were present in the court, were unable to record their statements in the cipher case, sources informed Geo News. Meanwhile, PTI's legal team submitted four applications including the one seeking the provision of the witnesses' names before each hearing. Two applications were filed by Qureshi, one seeking adjournment of the case without a hearing, and another seeking adjournment based on a bail application filed in the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Continued on Page 06

Gov't appeal on NAB laws adjourned

CJP Isa refuses to suspend NAB amendments verdict

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday indefinitely adjourned the hearing on the government's appeal against the apex court's verdict in the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) law amendments case, subjecting it to the issuance of a detailed order on the top court's practice and procedure law. The SC, on the other hand, directed accountability courts to continue conducting hearings of NAB references, while barring them from issuing any decision until the apex court announces its ruling on appeals against NAB law amendments verdict. This was the first intra-court appeal filed following the implementation of the aforementioned act, the hearing of which was held by a five-member bench of the apex court headed by CJ Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi. It should be noted that a three-member bench—headed by former chief justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah—had conducted more than 50 hearings in the case, declaring the most of the NAB amendments null and void on September 15 by a majority of 2-1. – DNA

